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A
REVOLUTIONARY MARRIAGE.

Drama in Five Acts,

BY

FLORENCE T. DONNELL.

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PRESS OF
WILLIAM R. JENKINS,
851 & 853 6th Avenue, New York.
1890.



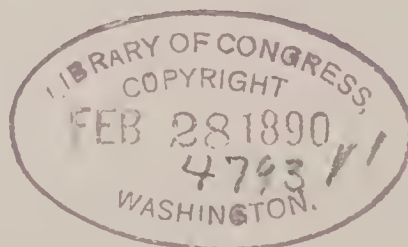
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CHARACTERS.

General GILBERT MEUNIER.

Captain, afterwards Colonel MOREAU.

Marquis de FRONTENAEC.

GRACCHUS BEAUTEMPS.

Monsieur TABELLION.

Corporal, afterwards Sergeant BIENVENU.

BRUTUS DULAC.

REGULUS RASPAIL.

YVES.

Marquise de FRONTENAEC.

LOUISE DE FRONTENAEC.

AMÉLIE MOREAU.

SOPHIE.

Time :—Act I, 24th of July 1794. Acts II, III, IV,
V, Autumn of 1797.

Place :—Château of Frontenaec, near Savenay, Depart-
ment of the Loire, France.

Act I, The Revolutionary Marriage.

“ II, The Return.

“ III, The Rivals.

“ IV, The Rupture.

“ V, The Reconciliation.

A REVOLUTIONARY MARRIAGE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Salon in the Château of Frontenaec in La Vendée. Long French windows on the terrace. Louis Quinze furniture, many dainty articles of bric à brac scattered about. Small fancy table or desk near the foreground, l. c., large oblong table, r. c. with embroidery stand, and arm chair near the table, but towards the center.

SCENE I.

MARQUISE and LOUISE.

Marquise de Frontenaec in arm chair, embroidering. She wears the large hoops of Louis XV's reign, grey hair dressed high, à la Pompadour. Whole costume, rich, but severe. Louise de Frontenaec, young girl of sixteen, looking out of one of the windows. She wears simple toilette of white, without hoops, made in the style of the day, rather short waisted, with fichu. Skirts two or three inches above the ground; slippers; flowing hair, caught by knot of light blue, or pink ribbon.

MARQUISE.—Do you see anything more, dearie?

LOUISE.—No, grandmamma, nothing more, and it is now more than ten minutes since I saw the last republican soldier disappear down the Nantes road.

MARQUISE.—Ah! I can never believe they are quite gone, since that horrible day after the battle of Savenay, when they searched the house for refugees from

the king's army. But why should I fear? I have not emigrated. I am a soldier's daughter, I can take no part in a civil war, when foreign enemies are at the frontiers; and then our peasants have always reported in our favor to the authorities at Nantes.

LOUISE, *coming forward and seating herself on tabouret at her grandmother's feet.*—Ah! grandmamma, I am not as brave, as you are. I think I should die if the blues were to come to the house again. Oh! that terrible man with the imperious voice, and the tricolor sash; how he made me shiver, when he looked at me so sternly, and asked me if there was nothing treasonable, I was concealing from the law. Ah! grandmamma, you know I am not brave, but I would have died rather than reveal that box, where you keep cousin Hector's letters, in the secret drawer of the *écritoire*.

MARQUISE, *looking around, startled.*—Hush! hush! my dearie; in these terrible days the walls have ears.

LOUISE, *seated on tabouret at the feet of the Marquise who caresses her from time to time.*—Ah! how well I remember cousin Hector; although it is more than five years since I saw him, and I was only eleven years old then; but I assure you grandmamma, I already thought myself quite a young lady.

MARQUISE, *smiling.*—I don't doubt it, little one.

LOUISE.—And cousin Hector used to flatter me, tell me how pretty I was, and a lot of other silly things, and then that I should be his little wife when I grew up, (*pouting*). But, for example, I should not have liked that.

MARQUISE.—Nor I either, now, my child, though once

it was my dearest dream for your cousin Hector, though he is my grandson, the last of his name, has displeased me deeply.

LOUISE.—I know you think he did wrong to emigrate, but poor Hector was always timid.

MARQUISE.—I might have excused him for deserting his king in the hour of danger. I cannot excuse him for joining his country's enemies, and spending his leisure in London, in a life of idle, and frivolous pleasure, In these days of anguish, of what does he write in every letter, conveyed with such difficulty, and danger, but of money, more money to be sent to him at any risk ; that he may waste it in disgraceful amusements.

LOUISE.—But since you wrote him four weeks ago that our last resources were exhausted ; have you not heard from him ?

MARQUISE.—Ah ! his last letter is his crowning insult. To think that once I dreamt of marrying my good little girl to such a wretch. Ah ! now I would rather give your hand to any stranger on whose honesty I could rely.

LOUISE.—Hush ! grandmamma, I have a decided objection to being married off in that kind of way. Why should we let any stranger intrude into our life, where we two are so happy together, in spite of everything.

MARQUISE, *drawing Louise to her breast, and kissing her.*
—Ah ! that is it, my dearest, if we could always remain together ; but I am very old my little one, I shudder to think that sometime I might die, and leave you all alone in this wicked world, without any one to protect, or care

for you. But you shall hear Hector's letter. I have it here in my bosom, (*drawing a letter from her dress*) afraid, as I am, to leave it anywhere else. (*reads*).

MADAME, AND DEAR GRANDMOTHER:

This will be placed in your hand, by a trusted agent of Monsieur Puisaye, who has charge of the King's interests at the Court of St. James, and who begs leave to inform you through my intermediary, that all arrangements have been made for a descent in force of his majesty's army, at some place on the coast between Lacmariquer, and Quiberon. We will be conveyed by a strong British fleet, and have received the promise of ten thousand English soldiers to accompany us. And, now madame, and dear grandmother, as I have often represented to Monsieur Puisaye, how near the King's cause is to your heart, how ardently you wish for his restoration, how justly you detest the present government of brigands; and yet how assured is your position with the authorities of Nantes; he thought that this unique and providential circumstance might be utilized for the successful termination of our expedition; if you would so far make a temporary sacrifice of your pride, as to mingle with that republican canaille, and so obtain a knowledge of their future movements; a knowledge which would be of inestimable value to his majesty, and all his faithful servants. I would also humbly suggest that my beautiful cousin might employ some of those graces and charms, with which nature has so abundantly endowed her, in so holy a mission.

I have made arrangements that all future messages, may be conveyed with the same safety, and celerity which has attended our past communications. I beg you to present the most respectful testimonials of my

admiration, and affection to my beautiful cousin ; and to believe me, as always, Madame, and dear grandmother.

Your affectionate grandson, and servant,
HECTOR HONORÉ SIGISBERT DE FRONTENAEC.

MARQUISE.—And this is the postscript.

DEAR AND RESPECTED MADAME,

It is unnecessary to say how anxiously we await your first communication.

(Signed) DE PUISAYE.

(While reading, the Marquise must show suppressed excitement and growing indignation).

MARQUISE.—And is not this infamous ? Oh ! that his father's son should dare to write me such a letter. Invite me to help introduce the enemy's army into his own country ; ask me, his aged grandmother to play the part of an adventuress ; and to lay out such an infamous rôle for you, you darling child ; that is what I will never forgive him. (*Rising and crossing to writing table l. c.*) But he shall receive his first communication soon. Come here, my little one, and help me with the secret drawer, your young fingers are nimbler than mine, for I will send him back all his disgraceful letters that I kept, poor fool, as tokens of affection.

(While Marquise writes, Louise takes out box, opens it, and lays it before her.) (*Noise of hurried steps outside. Enter Yves, followed by Sophie, L. D.*)

SCENE II.

MARQUISE, LOUISE, SOPHIE, YVES.

YVES.—Oh! madame; it's the blues, it's the blues: a whole brigade of them from Nantes. And they're coming up the hill to the château, with the general at their head.

SOPHIE.—And such a general, madame la marquise; without wig, or powder, and his horse's bridle mended with old ropes.

MARQUISE.—Run, run, my good Yves, and see if you can not delay their coming; and you, Sophie, go quick to the door on the terrace, and see that no one enters there.

(Exeunt Sophie and Yves).

MARQUISE.—Come, come Louise my child, don't tremble so, but help me; for if they come now we are lost.

(A noise of heavy tramping on the terrace. Louise in trying to reclose the box, lets it fall, and the papers are scattered on the floor. Marquise throws her handkerchief over her nephew's last letter and her answer, and stands in front of desk; while Louise nearer the background endeavors to conceal the box, and papers, by standing in front of them. Enter Beautemps, by window c.f., followed by Dulac and Raspail. Dulac and Raspail wear Phrygian caps, dark blue knit blouses and breeches, leather belts. Beautemps in simple and severe dress of the day, long double breasted coat, tricolor sash, hat with large tricolor cockade. Whole aspect stern and stiff, saluting slightly, but with dignity.

SCENE III.

BEAUTEMPS, DULAC, RASPAIL,
MARQUISE, and LOUISE.

BEAUTEMPS.—Salutation, and fraternity, citoyennes.

(*Unfolding paper with large seals, and reading*).

In the name of the Republic, one, and indivisible ; I, Caius Gracchus Beautemps, mayor of the Commune of Sâvenay ; by powers received from the representative of the people, Carrier, in Nantes, am authorized, and commissioned to search this house for all suspicious papers, documents, or other indications of treason.

(*To Dulac and Raspail*.)

Citizens, do your duty.

LOUISE, *starting forward imploringly, and in her hasty movement leaving exposed to view, overturned box and scattered papers*.—Ah! pity, Monsieur, have pity ; if you knew ; we meant no harm. My grandmother was even indignant——

MARQUISE, *who stands in front of écritoire, concealing letters from view*.—Be silent, child. You cannot move these men to pity. You but abase us by your useless prayers.

BEAUTEMPS, *perceiving the box with scattered papers*.—Peace, young woman. All the tears in the world will not wipe out treason to the country in times of danger ; nor the artfulness with which you have concealed your crime. Citizen Dulac, take up those papers and place them on the table ; then begin your search without further delay, and you, Citizen Raspail, go to General Meunier, and ask for an escort of soldiers to take these women to Nantes, there to suffer the penalty the law edicts for traitors.

RASPAIL.—Very well, citizen Mayor.

(Exit RASPAIL, w. c. f.)

MARQUISE.—But surely, Monsieur, you cannot be so inhuman as to inflict upon this child penalties for that of which I alone am guilty, if guilt there be.

BEAUTEMPS, *seated at table, r. c*—That will all depend upon what these papers may reveal. Oh! hah! from the emigrant Frontenac—hem!—he writes for money to be used in villainous schemes for the restoration of the tyrant, no doubt. Hem! hem! no! Debts of honor; debts of vice rather—gambling, unavoidable—say unavowable expenses. Hah! ah!—object to emigrate. Ah!—

(Meanwhile Dulac, who has been turning out the contents of drawers in cabinets, turning vases downwards to shake out supposed contents, etc., etc., advances towards the desk in the foreground, where the Marquise is standing. Louise, who has been watching him anxiously, starts forward to obstruct his advance towards her grandmother.)

DULAC, *pushing her aside roughly*.—Out of the way, young viper. These serpents learn to hiss young.

BEAUTEMPS, *looking up sharply*.—Out of the way, old woman, and let the desk be searched.

MARQUISE.—Never, while I live.

BEAUTEMPS.—Ah! I understand it all now, the fine plot, which would fool me with these innocent papers, while the real proofs of treason are concealed there.

(Rises and advances towards center.)

(Enter Corporal Bienvenu with six soldiers, uniform of the period).

SCENE IV.

BEAUTEMPS, MARQUISE, LOUISE, DULAC,
BIENVENU and SOLDIERS.

BIENVENU.—What are your orders citizen mayor?

BEAUTEMPS.—Remove these women, and hold them in waiting for the result of investigations.

BIENVENU, *aside*.—That old woman too, what a task for a soldier; and that pretty girl, what a task for a Frenchman. (*Salutes and advances reluctantly towards Marquise, followed by four of the soldiers, while two advance towards Louise*).

MARQUISE.—Oh! to see my darling child dragged away by the soldiers. My God! will no one have pity on me.

(*Enter Meunier, followed by Moreau, window c. f. Meunier in uniform of General of the Republican armies; Moreau in that of Captain. The soldiers step back saluting. The marquise still l. c. in front of the desk. Louise nearer the background l. Beautemps r. c. foreground.*)

SCENE V.

MEUNIER, MOREAU, MARQUISE, LOUISE, BEAUTEMPS, DULAC, BIENVENU and 6 SOLDIERS.

MEUNIER.—What is the meaning of this display of force, citizen mayor? (*Glancing at the two women*).

LOUISE, *starting forward, and catching him prayerfully by the hand*.—Oh! Monsieur, surely you will have pity. Everyone says the republican soldiers are brave, and brave men can not be merciless.

MEUNIER, *gently releasing his hand*.—Have no fear my child, if pity is due ; pity shall be shown,

BEAUTEMPS.—Ah ! Meunier, you do not know with what artful creatures you have to deal. They impose upon me those documents in which I can find nothing treasonable ; while the real nest of diabolical plots lies concealed in that desk from which the old aristocrat refuses to stir.

MEUNIER.—Gently, gently, citizen mayor : give this affair over to me. I think I can manage it without need of violence.

BEAUTEMPS.—There is no one living, has more confidence in the patriotism of the brave General Meunier than I have ; but is this not an affair which belongs to the civil, rather than the military authority.

MEUNIER.—I think not, citizen mayor ; but in any case, I will answer for the use I may make of my authority, and I need not assure you if I find here aught that indicates treasonable intents, aught that would endanger the republic ; there is no one who will guard her sacred cause more truly, more vigilantly than I.

BEAUTEMPS, *seizing Meunier's hand*.—I believe you citizen general. So be it, then. I wish you speedier, and I doubt not, more successful work than mine.

(Exit Beaupemps, followed by Dulac).

MEUNIER, *to Bienvenu*.—Corporal, take your men away.
(Exeunt Bienvenu and Soldiers, window c. f. after saluting.)

SCENE VI.

MEUNIER, MOREAU, MARQUISE, LOUISE.

MEUNIER, *to Marquise*.—And now citoyenne ; I need not tell you : you have no violence to expect from me. We soldiers came down into Brittany to combat men, not to badger women. But I must at the same time warn you that the only course at once safe, and wise, would be to give up to my aide de camp, Captain Moreau, any papers that desk may contain. Remember I do not threaten you; I will even confess, that there is nothing I would not do, compatible with my duty, to save you from the consequences of your own rashness. But there is a point, I do not disguise it from you, where my authority would be insufficient to protect you.

MARQUISE.—Monsieur, you are a gentleman, if you are a republican. To you I yield. I can only beg you to exonerate this child from all blame. Whatever that gentleman may find written there is my work—mine entirely.

MEUNIER.—Believe me, citoyenne, I will do all I can, meanwhile if you, and your granddaughter wish to retire to another room; I need not tell you ; you are at perfect liberty to do so; forgive me if I add all escape would be hopeless, as the château is surrounded by soldiers. It may seem a brutality to tell you this, citoyenne, but my motives are far from brutal.

MARQUISE.—I thank you for it Monsieur, as well for your other courtesies.

(Exeunt Marquise and Louise by d. r.)

SCENE VII.

MEUNIER and MOREAU.

(*Meunier seated at table examining papers. Moreau, after removing letters from desk, returns to table.*)

MEUNIER.—The poor old woman ; how hard she tried to control her grief.

MOREAU.—And the pretty young one, too. Ah ! citizen general, if I had not left my heart in Paris, I should lose it now.

MEUNIER, *still examining papers*.—Ah ! if those pale, cadaverous politicians had half the humanity we soldiers have, civil wars would soon be ended. Plots, plots, always plots ; as if intrigue availed aught against intrigue. Gordian knots can only be cut by the sword, and when that's done, there should be an end of it : and after the victory there should be peace. But, ah ! what's this ? descent on Quiberon ! landing in force ! they must know that in Paris. But listen, listen to the answer, this is not a traitor's letter.

(*Reading Marquise's unfinished letter to Hector.*)

MONSIEUR DE FRONTENAEC,

I may have been guilty of many weaknesses. I do not know what crime I could have committed, that you, my grandson, should dare to insult me, the last who will bear the name of Frontenaec, for you are unworthy of it. Monsieur, my father was killed at Denain fighting the Austrians and English, my husband was killed at Fontenoy fighting the English and Austrians ; and you, their descendant, ask me to aid in bringing the English, and Austrians into the heart of this country for which they died, and all under the pretext that we are suffering

from the atrocities of an infamous government. No one can wish more ardently than I the king's return, which I am willing to serve by all legitimate means. No one can execrate more deeply than I this government of brigands, but when you make such propositions to me, all else disappears; and all I see is that they are still the same enemies, and that this is still the same France.

MEUNIER.—Ah! the noble old woman, I must save her, Moreau. Democrats or Aristocrats, all those who love my country, and are true to it, are near, and dear to me,

MOREAU.—I can't find anything so very serious here, either. The young scamp of a grandson seems to have been always in want of money; but what does that prove, that he was vicious, as all those young foplings are.

MEUNIER.—It proves much more; it proves that the money, this young scamp extorted from these simple women, went into the pockets of Puisaye in London, and was transformed into guns, and cartridges, in the hands of the royalist soldiers in La Vendée. If I can see that so plainly, do you think the lynx eyes of the authorities will be duller. Then those foolish phrases against the government, and about serving the tyrant by all legitimate means. Ah! I can see no way to save the poor creatures.

MOREAU.—But surely, if any one can, you can citizen general; you who have rendered such services, in whom every one has such confidence. Why even that cross bull-dog Beautemps let go his prey at the first word from you.

MEUNIER.—Yes! that is true, and all depends on him; but how long would his confidence last after I had left.

True, he thinks those papers he has seen, as innocent of political meaning, as they were in the eyes of the women who received them; true, he need never see these others. All that it is important for the government to know, the government *shall* know. But when his suspicions are once roused, they are never quenched, till he finds, or fabricates a crime. Still, he is an honest fellow in spite of his harshness, and I believe if there is any one in the world he loves it is me, anything that would be sacred to him, it would be those in whom I am interested.

MOREAU.—Faith, then I see but one way out of the difficulty : that would be for you to marry the granddaughter. Surely, he would not molest the wife of his dearest friend.

MEUNIER.—I marry ! Are you mad ? I wed a child like that ! Why I don't believe she's twelve years old. What are you laughing at Moreau ?

MOREAU.—Nothing ! nothing at all ! I was only thinking citizen general, that you are a better judge of swords and guns, than of young ladies. Why ! she's the prettiest little fairy I ever clapt eyes on, and sixteen, or seventeen at least, maybe more. Those aristocrats are so small, and delicate, you can never tell just how old they are. Marry her, and Beautemps himself won't think of molesting the Citoyenne Meunier ; and her grandmother, that fine old lady will end her days in peace, while the delicious little beauty awaits her martial husband's return from the wars. Ah ! citizen general, you are a happy man ; you have a chance of putting everything right, and winning the prettiest wife in France into the bargain.

MEUNIER.—You are in a merry humor; yet there is reason in what you say. It seems the only course.

MOREAU.—The only course. Fie, citizen general, you are a stoic. Faith if it were not for my little Amélie I'd envy you. Ah! there's no man living has a heartier, healthier hatred for male aristocrats than I have. But may Saint Just behead me, and Carrier drown me, if that hatred extends to the women of the aristocracy. I adore them all from first to last, with the fervor of a true republican soldier. Old, and young, pretty, and ugly, gray haired, and blonde haired, blue eyed or black, I kiss my hand to them all, the dear, suave, artful, distracting creatures, who can twist the most roystering trooper of us around their pretty little fingers, if they but half care to try.

MEUNIER.—A truce to your merry badinage, comrade, there are difficulties you think not of. The government must know of this landing of the English; but that will be for later. For the present I only wish to ensure the safety of this high-minded old woman, and this gracious child, by the only means which seem to be left to me. I mean no treason to my country. God forbid! my noble country, assailed on all sides, and yet combating for the good of all. I would give her the last drop of my blood, but I would save her from the dishonor, and the doom, which cling through all history to the governments which shed the blood of women. For the rest, the marriage would be but a form, to be dissolved, as soon as circumstances would permit.

MOREAU.—Only a form, citizen general, bah! that would spoil all the romance.

MEUNIER.—Yes, only a form, but as there is no time to lose; go seek the citoyenne Frontenaec, and request

her to honor me with her presence, that I may explain to her the dangers of her position, and the temporary expedient to which we are driven.

MOREAU.—Very well! citizen general. (*Aside.*) Temporary expedient, bah! what a hardened stoic, and such a pretty girl too. (*Exit Moreau, d. r.*)

SCENE VIII.

MEUNIER, *reading Frontenaec's letter*.—Will land in force between Quiberon, and Locmariquer, ten thousand English. The government must know this instantly, and if they do not credit it; if they do not take it seriously;—then they must be convinced, convinced at any cost. This I will keep. (*Putting letter in his breast. Rereading Marquise's letter.*) They are still the same enemies, it is still the same France. Noble soul! she shall not suffer, and the little girl who asked me to have pity. Ah! I will save them both.

(*Enter Marquise, d. r.*)

SCENE IX.

MARQUISE.—But what is it, that gentleman tells me, Monsieur, that you have found a way to protect my poor grandchild from the consequences of my imprudence? He says an honorable, and an easy way.

MEUNIER.—You may not think it either citoyenne, when you learn it is the shelter of the plebeian name of Gilbert Meunier, he offers you; but, be not startled, it will be but a temporary shelter. I have read those

letters. I will not disguise from you that my admiration for your patriotism has extinguished my resentment for political opinions which I do not share, and has inspired me with the proposition, I am about to make.

MARQUISE.—Speak, monsieur, I am listening.

MEUNIER.—Although, I believe you incapable of a thought of treason; citizen Beautemps would be much harder to convince; he is of that harsh race who would rather punish the innocent, than suffer the guilty to escape. While I remain here, I might be able to protect you; but I leave for Vannes in a few hours, and when Beautemp's suspicions have once been so fiercely roused, they would not slumber long after my departure.

MARQUISE.—I am listening attentively, Monsieur, what is it you would propose?

MEUNIER.—Citizen Beautemps loves me, and justly trusts my devotion for the republic, for I am devoted to the republic, body and soul.

MARQUISE.—Continue, monsieur Meunier.

MEUNIER.—But Beautemps, hard as he seems, has affections, and me he loves; everything that belongs to me, even nominally, would be sacred to him.

MARQUISE.—And you would wish that Mademoiselle de Frontenaec should become sacred in his eyes, by becoming your wife.

MEUNIER.—Citoyenne, you have spared me the difficulty of saying it.

MARQUISE.—You ask me to give you the hand of a child whom I adore; to you a stranger.

MEUNIER.—Ah! citoyenne, the marriage would be a mere formality; to be dissolved as soon as the danger is passed.

MARQUISE.—And what guarantee of that should I have.

MEUNIER, *haughtily*.—Only a soldier's word; citoyenne.

MARQUISE, *looking in Meunier's eyes deliberately, and after a pause, extending her hand*.—And that will be sufficient. But in spite of the manners of the court in which I passed my youth, marriage has never been to me, a mere formality; and my grandchild shall be taught to respect in prosperity the name which has sheltered her in adversity.

MEUNIER, *handing Marquise her letter*.—Here is your letter, citoyenne, I give it back to you in the name of our common country; but your grandson's letter I shall keep, and it will be my first care to acquaint the government with that portion which concerns the public safety.

MARQUISE.—Surely, Monsieur, you could not be so base as to betray my unfortunate grandson.

MEUNIER, *bitterly*.—Ah! fear not, he is safe in England no harm will come to him. I shall mention no names, if I can induce the Committee of Public Safety, to believe me without them.

MARQUISE.—Without them, and if they do not believe you, with them, I suppose?

MEUNIER.—Yes, then, if they do not believe me, with them; but you shall receive ample warning to flee, I promise you that.

MARQUISE.—And you Monsieur, how would an alliance with a family tainted with such hideous treason serve you?

MEUNIER.—It is my profession, citoyenne, to take the chances of life or death.

MARQUISE.—You are a noble fellow, Monsieur Meunier, and in my most ambitious dreams for my granddaughter; believe me, I never wished her any other husband than a brave, and honest man.

MEUNIER.—And now, as there is no time to lose, for the brigade leaves for Vannes, at six o'clock, I will see Beautemps, and reassure him, and then as he is mayor of Savenay, he is entitled to perform the ceremony.

MARQUISE.—And I will go to prepare my grandchild. And once again Monsieur, let me thank you for the trouble you have taken, still more for the danger, you may incur, and let me tell you that I trust you.

MEUNIER.—And indeed citoyenne, your confidence shall not be betrayed.

(Exit Marquise, d. r., at the same time enter Moreau by window c. f.)

SCENE X.

MEUNIER and MOREAU.

MEUNIER.—But where have you been all this time? you know I have no secrets from you, comrade.

MOREAU.—Only mooning about out there on the terrace, to see you were not interrupted in your treasonable interview. But I saw Beautemps coming up this way, and so came in to warn you.

MEUNIER.—He is the very man I want to see.

(Enter Beautemps by window c. f.)

SCENE XI.

BEAUTEMPS, MEUNIER and MOREAU.

BEAUTEMPS.—And, so you too citizen general have been convinced of their treason, and have sent them off to Nantes.

MEUNIER.—On the contrary, Beautemps, so convinced am I of their loyalty, and patriotism, that I have determined to make their cause mine by marrying the granddaughter this very afternoon.

BEAUTEMPS.—Are you crazy, Meunier, or have those artful aristocrats bewitched you with their devilish wiles.

MEUNIER.—Have you ever known me to be wanting in intelligence Beautemps, and are not the days of witchcraft over?

BEAUTEMPS.—I don't understand it at all, there must be some devilish mystery. That young woman rushing to me with her whining outcries, as if to attract my attention to those harmless papers, strewn on the floor in a studied confusion, while the old aristocrat masked the real danger. Did you have the desk searched, citizen general?

MOREAU, *interrupting quickly*.—Yes I searched it myself, I can explain all the mystery citizen mayor; it's not so dark a one as you think. It all comes from your not knowing how to deal with women. If you attempt to order them, they are sure to disobey. But the citizen general has gentler manners.

BEAUTEMPS.—Too gentle, I am afraid. (*Turning to Meunier.*) Did you find nothing treasonable in the desk?

MEUNIER.—And, if I had, would I give my name to cover treason? Surely, Beautemps, you would not suspect Gilbert Meunier of disloyalty to his country in her hour of need. And then if my wife were guilty of treason, my head would answer for it. That is my guarantee, the real proof of my penetration and my sincerity. And, now, do you believe me, when I say, the Citoyennes Frontenaec are guiltless of treason.

BEAITEMPS, *staggered*.—You must be right, Gilbert, you must see deeper than I. Nothing then remains but to prepare for the wedding.

MEUNIER, *gayly*.—Yes, a real revolutionary wedding, and you shall perform the ceremony, and remember it is to your care I shall leave my bride, and that on her safety depends mine also.

BEAITEMPS.—Fear not! fear not! I shall see no harm comes to her, that none may come to you. (*Seating himself at the table, at the end facing the audience, and spreading out a large sheet of paper, and beginning to write.*) But there's no time to lose; have you by chance your birth certificate?

MEUNIER.—By a strange chance I have. (*Taking out paper and handing it.*)

(*Enter Marquise, leading in Louise followed by Yves and Sophie, d. r.*)

SCENE XII.

MARQUISE, LOUISE, MEUNIER, MOREAU,
BEAITEMPS, YVES and SOPHIE.

BEAITEMPS.—And so citoyenne, you have decided to come over to the republic, and take a patriot for a son-

in-law, and I am, it seems, to watch over your safety, and answer for your loyalty.

MARQUISE, *aside*.—It is for the sake of this dear child. (*Aloud*). You shall have no cause to complain of us, Monsieur.

MEUNIER, *advancing*.—I assure you, you shall have no cause to regret your confidence.

MARQUISE.—I do not doubt it, Monsieur.

BEAUTEMPS.—But come quick, there is no time to lose. Give me your papers, (*Marquise hands Beautemps package of documents.*) and you shall see how a republican marriage is performed. (*Beautemps at the head of table facing audience, Marquise and Louise r. Meunier and Moreau, l. Yves and Sophie behind the two groups.*)

BEAUTEMPS, *reading*.—On the sixth day of the month of Thermidor, year two of the Republic, one and indivisible. Act of marriage of Gilbert Meunier, general of division, commanding the left wing of the army of the West, aged thirty two, born at Clermont in the department of the Puy-de-Dôme, son of Jean Baptiste Meunier, carpenter,—

MARQUISE.—Carpenter!

MEUNIER, *proudly*.—Yes, and a good and honest one, citoyenne.

BEAUTEMPS, *continuing*.—And of Marie, born Lachapelle, his wife; and of Louise Diane Marie Hermence Sabine Frontenaec—we will leave out the de—aged sixteen, born at the dwelling formerly known as Château of Frontenaec, department of the Loire; daughter of Louis Honoré Frontenaec, officer in the navy, formerly called royal, and of Diane, born Sorberac, his wife.

And now do you Gilbert Meunier, and Louise Frontenaec join hands in the presence of Gracchus Beauteemps, mayor of Savenay, and swear faith and fidelity.

MEUNIER and LOUISE *join hands across the table; Meunier firmly, Louise faintly.*—I do!

MEUNIER, *aside.*—How frightened she looks the poor child! I shall never trouble her.

LOUISE, *aside.*—How brave and proud he is, how different from all others.

BEAUTEEMPS, *rising.*—And so I declare you man and wife, in the name of the Republic, one and indivisible, till death, or the law shall part you. And now for the signatures, (*handing pen to Louise*). You sign first, Citoyenne Meunier.

LOUISE.—Citoyenne Meunier,

MARQUISE, *aside.*—Oh! may I never regret this. A carpenter's son too; but he is generous, and I do trust him.

(*As Louise rises, Meunier signs.*)

BEAUTEEMPS.—There are four witnesses, that is all the law requires.

(*Marquise and Moreau sign, also Sophie and Yves, the last two awkwardly.*)

BEAUTEEMPS.—Here it is, as safely, and soundly done, as if it had taken the whole clergy of the ancient régime. I shall send a copy to the citoyenne to-morrow, and have one forwarded to you at Vannes, citizen general, but (*Taking out large old fashioned watch.*) there is no time to lose, so I will congratulate you citoyenne, for having won so patriotic a husband, and you Meunier on

having made so attractive a convert to the cause of justice and liberty; and so, a happy honey-moon.

(*Exit Beautemps.*)

(*A sound of trumpets heard behind the scene. The French clairon call.*)

SCENE XIII,

MARQUISE, LOUISE, MEUNIER, MOREAU.

MEUNIER.—And I too, must leave, citoyennes. (*To the Marquise.*) But do not forget what I told you; and if you receive a warning from me, lose no time; but fly instantly to some other part of France, under an assumed name; it would be your only chance of safety, for my name as well as yours would then have become fatal.

MARQUISE.—And you, Monsieur, how dearly you would then pay for the protection you have so kindly given us.

MEUNIER.—Let us hope for the best, and if the worst come to the worst,—Well!—a man can die but once, a day sooner or a day later, what matters it? The fatherland, at least, would be forewarned and forearmed. And, now, my comrade and I must bid you farewell, hoping that the next time we meet, it may be under happier auspices.

MARQUISE.—It is trying circumstances which prove men's metal; and you, Monsieur, have stood well the proof, and have a right to all my gratitude; and your comrade too, who, I am sure, has seconded your good intentions.

MOREAU, *gallantly*.—Ah! there are no revolutions which should deprive age, and beauty of the right to the services of a true Frenchman.

MEUNIER.—And now, once again, adieu, citoyennes; till happier times may enable me to release you.

(*Exeunt Meunier and Moreau.*)

(*Bugle calls heard at intervals during the preceding scene. The window thrown open reveals on the terrace a line of soldiers, facing the house. As Meunier and Moreau pass, they ground arms, and the fanfare is heard, with which a commander is saluted in France; bugle calls in the distance.*)

SCENE XIV.

MARQUISE and LOUISE.

LOUISE.—Oh! he has saved us grandmamma!

MARQUISE.—Yes, and at the risk of his life. Let us never forget that; and remember my child, that a marriage so contracted, should be sacred in the eyes of a true woman, even if it be a *revolutionary marriage*.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A dainty boudoir in the Château of Frontenaec, furnished in white, and gold, with blue brocaded, or tapestry coverings. Small fancy tables, sofas, etc. ; little work table l. c. near the foreground, with portrait on stand, and vase of flowers. Window in background, l. f., door r. f. ; view of flower garden from window. Large table r. c. with books, newspapers, etc. Sophie, coquettish soubrette with lace cap and ribbons, arranging furniture, and small articles about the room, takes up portrait on work table l. c.

SOPHIE.—There's the General's portrait, that Colonel Moreau's wife gave the little Madame. Well! it must be acknowledged he is a fine looking man. But for a droll husband, he is a droll husband. My faith, it's three years since he married the little madame in the big parlor down on the terrace; and not a word, nor a sign from him since, excepting the message he sent through that cross Monsieur Beauteemps, more than a year ago, when the old Marquise died. (*Picking up newspapers on table r. c.*) Ah! but the madame's newspapers must not be disturbed. The Moniteur, always the Moniteur, and that's full of nothing but battles. Battles! battles! battle of Millesimo! battle of Dego! battle of Arcola! battle of Rivoli! What reading for a pretty young thing like the madame; then madame Moreau is just as crazy. Ah! but I understand it all; I had a military beau once myself, Bonaventure Bienvenu of the French guards. But he went away to the wars in '92, and I haven't laid eyes on him since. I hope he hasn't been killed, poor fellow, in these horrid

wars. Fighting and bloodshed all the time. It's enough to make anybody sick, and we with such a gay government, too. I would have understood it in that ugly Robespierre's time. Why, one was afraid even to be stylish, then.

(*Enter Yves carrying large bouquet.*)

—

SCENE II.

SOPHIE and YVES.

YVES.—Here's a bouquet which monsieur le Marquis has just gathered in the garden, and he begs that Mademoiselle will accept it with his respectful compliments. (*Lays bouquet on the table.*)

SOPHIE, *reproachfully*.—Mademoiselle.

YVES.—Yes! mademoiselle de Frontenaec. I can never train my old mouth to call her anything else. You would'nt want me to call her citoyenne, I suppose.

SOPHIE.—Oh! no, every one can say monsieur or madame, now. Indeed it's the fashion. But do you think the little Madame would like to hear you call her Mademoiselle, she who was so proud when she received that big letter from the government up in Paris, telling her General Meunier's wound at the battle of Arcola would not be fatal.

YVES.—You can't make an old Breton like me take seriously such a marriage as that, around a parlor table, without priest, or candles.

SOPHIE.—You may take it any way you like, but it's my opinion that the principal thing will be how the little madame takes it.

YVES.—And then I don't like the idea of our Mademoiselle marrying a blue, and a stranger too. Why, there's our own young marquis ready to kiss the very ground she walks on.

SOPHIE, *pettishly*.—And great good may it do him. It's my opinion, that now he's once got back to France, with permission of the government; he'd better leave off politics; and leave off trying to court the little Madame, too.

YVES.—But is he not her own cousin, and without the revolution, would have been her husband, too; I've heard the old Marquise say so many a time.

SOPHIE.—You may think anything you like, but I tell you, your Monsieur de Frontenaec would do better to be more cautious, for that stern Monsieur Beautemps has his eye on him, and he living in the château too, to get us all into more trouble again.

YVES, *angrily*.—I suppose you would turn him out of the house, where his family have lived for generations.

SOPHIE.—And what business had he to come here, any way; courting a married woman.

YVES.—I didn't know you Parisians were so scrupulous.

SOPHIE.—We are a deal more scrupulous than some people who are always boasting up their virtues.

(*Exit Yves angrily.*)

SCENE III.

SOPHIE.—But the little Madame is coming from the garden; I hear her light step.

(*Enter Louise by the window l. f. She wears an elegant Directoire house, or reception dress. Large Leghorn hat, the strings tied to form a basket, hanging on her arm, filled with flowers.*)

SOPHIE, *holding bouquet*.—Monsieur de Frontenaec begs you will accept these flowers, madame.

LOUISE, *coldly*.—Very well Sophie, give Monsieur de Frontenaec my compliments, and thank him for his attention.

(*Sophie crosses to l. c., lays flowers on work table, then exit by d. l.*)

SCENE IV.

(*Louise advances towards table, lays her hat on chair, then taking some of the flowers from vase, places one in her hair, and replenishes contents from flowers in her hat.*)

LOUISE.—All the pretty, delicate flowers are beginning to wither; I don't like these great gaudy artemisias, and dahlias. Ah! there are Hector's flowers, I can not bear to see them on this table, it seems like a disloyalty. (*Tossing bouquet on chair, taking up portrait.*) Yes that is like him, the laughty air, and the bright dark eyes that looked at me so kindly when I appealed to him; but how fiercely they flashed on that cruel Beautemps; and he risked his life to save us; how often grandmamma has told me of it; and if Robespierre had not fallen so soon, he might have died for us. My hero! (*Looking around startled.*) Ah! if anyone were to hear me. I ought to be prouder. But I am proud, very proud, when I read of his heroism, of all he has braved, and endured.

He, so daring; how strange it is that I should be his wife, I who am so timid. Ah! but they deceived me in my childhood; the republic for which men do such deeds must be a holy thing. But where is my *Moniteur*; it ought to be here now. (*Picking up paper from table r. c.*) Ah! here it is. (*Reading.*) Council of Ancients! Council of Five Hundred! Barras' ball! I don't want to read that. Ah! Presentation to the Executive Directory, of sixty flags conquered by the army of Italy. (*Reading.*) A crowd of citizens filled the windows, and the courtyard of the palace. The horse guards were ranged in double hedge around the platform, a band of military music executed popular airs, while joy animated all hearts, and shone on all faces. A salvo of artillery announced the arrival of the sixty flags captured at Mantua, and of the General of Division Meunier charged with presenting them.—He in Paris, the 10th Vendémiaire, and to-day is the 14th. Oh! my God! if he were to come here to-day. I who have so long wished for his coming; how it affrights me. What will I say to him? what will he say to me? Oh! how it affrights me!

(*Enter Yves, d. r. f. announcing Madame Moreau and Monsieur Tâbellion. Enter Amélie Moreau, followed by Tâbellion. Exit Yves. Amélie wears Directoire toilette, large bonnet. Tâbellion complete Muscadin dress in pale colors, huge cravat, long cane, etc.*)

SCENE V.

AMÉLIE.—I saw Monsieur Tâbellion out on the terrace looking as if he would like to come in; so I brought him under my protection.

TABELLION.—Ah! Mesdames, if it were not for your charming kindness, how desolate life would be to me here in this dull provincial village. I who was born to dream of nothing but the delights, and elegances of Paris.

LOUISE.—Ah! let us hope, Monsieur Tâbellion that your zeal in filling your office of public accuser will cause the government to reward you with an appointment which will restore you to your beloved Paris. And you dear Amélie what gives me the pleasure of your company so early? (*Aside.*) Oh! if he were to come to-day!

AMÉLIE.—Oh! I came to tell you the good news. Colonel Moreau arrived last night from Laval, where he stopped on the way down from Paris, to see after some property of mine, left me by the same kind, old uncle from whom I inherited the place down at the end of the park, when I came here to live six months ago. You may imagine how pleased I was to see Lucien. It is so long since we have met. I have been telling him all about you, and what good friends we are. May I bring him up to see you?

LOUISE.—Oh! with so much pleasure I assure you. (*Aside.*) His dearest friend!

AMÉLIE.—And we can talk our husbands' campaigns over together.

TABELLION.—Oh! we poor civilians have no chance with the ladies, now there are so many soldiers. Our only consolation is to try to serve the country, to protect it from enemies at home, while the others combat abroad.

AMÉLIE, *gayly*.—Ah! they tell me, Monsieur Tâbellion that you discovered a terrible conspiracy only last week.

TABELLION.—Ah! ladies do not add to my despair by your cruelty.

AMÉLIE.—Ah! yes, do tell us. I am sure common report wronged you.

LOUISE.—Yes, do tell us, Monsieur Tâbellion.

TABELLION.—Ah! ladies, I am sure you will do me justice. Well! I will begin at the beginning. One night last week I was at a little card party at the house of Monsieur Forestier, President of the Tribunal. You know it is about two kilometers out on the Nantes road, but as the night was fine, though very windy, I thought I would walk into town. Well! nothing very exciting occurred for half a kilometer, but just as I was passing the farm of Pierre Couennaec, I saw above the hedge, strange figures moving in a field of buckwheat. I slipped up on the mound, and peered through the hedge, though concealing my person carefully, as whatever might be my zeal I could not expect to make headway against such odds.

AMÉLIE.—Of course not, and with your delicate tastes, too.

LOUISE, *kindly*.—Continue, Monsieur Tâbellion.

TABELLION, *excitedly*.—And there they were! there they were! the accursed conspirators, a whole crowd of them, twenty at least, gesticulating wildly with their long thin arms.

AMÉLIE.—And had they all long, thin arms? What a strange thing! So many of them too!

TABELLION.—And I distinctly heard them whisper in ghastly, rustling tones; then one of them uttered a loud, hoarse shriek, and I turned, and fled, sure, as I was, that they had given the alarm, and that if they captured me; the government never would be warned.

AMÉLIE.—Without counting that you would never live to warn it.

LOUISE, *aside*.—Ah! I wonder if he will come to-day.

TABELLION.—I have just said so, madame, counting the fact that I would not live to warn it. Well! the next morning, just after dawn, I went, and woke up the Captain of gendarmes, and mighty cross he was too about the loss of sleep.

AMÉLIE.—Of course he was. He doesn't want to go to Paris.

TABELLION.—Well! any way, on hearing my story, he promised me the aid of a dozen men to accompany me that night to the buckwheat field, thinking the conspirators would have a rendezvous in the same place. But when I got there, I thought I'd arrest Couennaec first, that he might not warn them; and what do you think that shameless scoundrel had the audacity to swear? Why! that they were not conspirators at all, but scarecrows he had placed in the field that very morning, and offered to conduct us there to prove it.

AMÉLIE.—And what did you find, Monsieur Tâbellion?

TABELLION.—Three scarecrows, sure enough, that the scamp had placed there, to turn aside suspicion. Who ever heard of three scarecrows close together in one field.

AMÉLIE.—But, ah, Monsieur Tâbellion, the crows are so big in Brittany. (*Tabellion rises offended.*)

LOUISE, *to Amélie*.—Fie! fie! you are cruel, the poor fellow!

AMÉLIE.—But, what's the good of having a little wit, if one can't spend it on fools.

Enter YVES, announcing.—Monsieur Beautemps.

(*Enter Beautemps. Exit Yves.*)

SCENE VI.

LOUISE, AMÉLIE, BEAUTEMPS and TABELLION.

(*Beautemps salutes Louise and Amélie, Tabellion also, but very slightly.*)

BEAUTEMPS.—Salutations, citoyennes, and you citizen accuser; have you discovered no more conspirators? (*Aside.*) What is the poppinjay doing here at this hour?

TABELLION.—It is all very well to sneer about it, but I tell you they were conspirators.

BEAUTEMPS.—Ah! it is not too much zeal for the public cause, I shall complain of; but some people show too much watchfulness in small things, and too much gullability in large ones.

TABELLION.—I am sure I cannot tell what you can mean, Monsieur Beautemps. I am sure that can not apply to me.

BEAUTEMPS.—I would advise you to send fewer letters to Paris, that is all.

AMÉLIE.—Oh ! Monsieur Beautemps, why do you spoil all our little diversions. I do believe you have been unable to enjoy life since Robespierre fell.

TABELLION.—Oh ! Robespierre, that miserable fellow who wore a sky blue coat, and a snuff colored pantaloons. Such gaudy colors. How can anyone regret his time, when they wore small cravats, and no buckles on their shoes.

BEAUTEMPS.—Yes, a time when the public accusers of the Republic did not consort with returned emigrants.

AMÉLIE, *aside*.—Monsieur de Frontenaec ! what can he mean ?

Enter YVES, announcing.—Monsieur de Frontenaec.

BEAUTEMPS, *aside*.—Monsieur de Frontenaec, I believe the old scoundrel would have said Marquis, if he had dared.

(*Enter Frontenaec, elegant dress of the period, but darker in color and less fantastic than that of Tabellion.*)

SCENE VII.

BEAUTEMPS, FRONTENAEC, LOUISE, AMÉLIE
and TABELLION.

FRONTENAEC.—I am delighted to see you, Madame Moreau, and you my beautiful cousin, and you also Messieurs. (*Kisses Amélie's hand, advances to kiss that of Louise, but she steps aside, and points to a chair.*)

LOUISE.—Sit down there, cousin Hector, and Monsieur Tâbellion will tell you all the news.

FRONTENAEC.—I am always charmed to be instructed by Monsieur Tabellion.

BEAUTEMPS.—She encourages their intimacy. Can it be, that she is in the plot, too? But, no! that I don't believe.

LOUISE, *graciously*.—Come, Monsieur Beautemps, and take a seat by me.

BEAUTEMPS.—Some other time, willingly, citoyenne; but (*looking at Frontenaec*), I was not born a nobleman, and I can not feign a friendship when I do not feel it.

(*Enter Yves.*)

SCENE VIII.

YVES, BEAUTEMPS, FRONTENAEC, TABELLION,
LOUISE, AMÉLIE.

YVES.—Madame, Dulac is outside, and says there's a gentleman at Monsieur Beautemps' house, would like to see him.

BEAUTEMPS.—And did he say what kind of a man he was?

YVES.—Oh, yes; a tall man in a military cloak, just come by the Nantes diligence.

BEAUTEMPS.—I must go. Salutations, citoyennes; I regret to leave you, but I am sure there are some here who will not miss me (*looking at Frontenaec and Tabellion.*)

(*Exit Beautemps and Yves.*)

SCENE IX.

LOUISE, AMÉLIE, FRONTENAEC AND TABELLION.

AMELIE.—Oh! the sour man; it gives me a cold chill only to look at him; but I, too, must be off, for it would not be right to desert Colonel Moreau, would it, after having seen so little of him in these last two years that he's been on the Rhine. Oh! these wars, these wars. But won't one of you gentlemen give me his arm to aid me through those long muddy paths of the park. (*Aside to Louise.*) You poor child I see they bore you to death; your thoughts are far away.

TABELLION.—Oh! madame, with the greatest pleasure.
(*Exeunt Amélie and Tabellion.*)

SCENE X.

LOUISE AND FRONTENAEC.

LOUISE.—Why did you not conduct Madame Moreau home?

FRONTENAEC.—Oh! you are cruel; you cannot bear to be one instant alone with me; with me who adore you.

LOUISE.—Do not say such things to me; I will not endure it.

FRONTENAEC.—Oh! you were not always so cruel. Do you remember when I used to call you my little wife; you never resented it.

LOUISE, *deliberately arranging flowers*.—I was only eleven years old, and besides, if I did not resent it, it was because I thought it made me appear a young lady.

FRONTENAEC, *passionately*.—And without the revolution, you would have been my wife, the wife of one of your own race; one of your own caste. Ah! do not think that this accursed state of things shall last forever; when the descendants of great, historical families are obliged to flee their native land, tracked like outcasts, while the sons of peasants and laborers govern it.

LOUISE.—Those who have saved the country from annihilation have a right to govern it.

FRONTENAEC.—I did not know your politics were so revolutionary.

LOUISE.—They are not politics; they are only sentiments; a woman has no politics.

FRONTENAEC.—Oh! yes she has—the politics of the man she loves.

LOUISE.—Then my politics should be very lofty, very noble and magnanimous, for—for I would not love one who was not.

FRONTENAEC.—And that I can never be in your eyes. I have not had the inestimable privilege of being surrounded by a halo of romance. Ah! my beautiful cousin, if you knew how I adore you, you would have pity, and treat me more graciously.

LOUISE.—Treat you more graciously, willingly, cousin Hector, but on one condition—that you promise never to speak to me again as you did just now.

FRONTENAEC.—Ah! do not bid me give up all hope. Ah! do not bid me think that you would take seriously

that absurd marriage, which it is evident General Meunier himself cannot think anything but the merest form; he who has not even written you a word in all these years. Ah! do not bid me think you would consider yourself bound to that coarse peasant, that—

LOUISE.—Not a word against him; I will not endure it.

FRONTENAEC.—And I am not even to be permitted to utter a word of persuasion, a word of justification. Ah! that is bitter. There are some men in this world more unhappy than they deserve to be, and others overwhelmed with favors they persistently disregard.

(Exit Frontenaec.)

SCENE XI.

LOUISE.—Oh! what did he mean?—A marriage which General Meunier himself cannot think anything but the merest form; then he taunted me with his not having written me a line all these years. Oh! can it be true that he—I dare not think of it!—but that cold message through Monsieur Beautemps when grand-mamma died: “Tell Madame de Frontenaec’s granddaughter that many may have loved her grandmother more, none could have admired her more than I. Tell her to accept from me all that respectful sympathy to which she has a right.” Madame de Frontenaec’s granddaughter! Did he say that? Ah! no; it must have been that harsh Monsieur Beautemps changed the phrase to vex me.

(Enter Sophie, handing letter on salver.)

SCENE XII.

SOPHIE AND LOUISE.

SOPHIE.—Madame, it's a letter just come from Monsieur Beautemps.

LOUISE. — From Monsieur Beautemps. Very well, Sophie.

(Exit Sophie.)

SCENE XIII.

LOUISE.

LOUISE.—From Monsieur Beautemps, and there is no direction. Oh! could it be—if this should be his first letter, the first letter he has ever written me. Oh! how my hand trembles opening it. *(Reads.)* “Madame, three years ago I pledged myself to release you from bonds, which unhappy circumstances seemed to make the only course likely to ensure to you and your respected grand, mother at once security, and protection. A week later, when the news of the fall of Robespierre reached the provinces, I was recalled to Paris. Times were still too unsettled for me to yet form a decided resolution. It was still uncertain whether a nominal marriage to a well-known republican, might not be essential to your safety. Two weeks later I left for the Army of Italy, where arduous duties have since detained me.

But now that we enjoy the protection of a more lenient, though equally firmly republican government, and that I for the first time in three years have leisure at my disposal, I come to fulfill that promise so solemnly made, and to free you from a position which must be undoubtedly an embarrassment and annoyance.

Hoping, madame, you will understand and pardon this long delay, I am your servant,

GILBERT MEUNIER."

Not one word more! not one! Oh! how could he do it?—while I—Oh! my God! (*Weeps hysterically.*) Oh! that hateful Hector was right; he never loved me; he has never thought of me, I, who have had no thought, no dream all these years, but of his return. (*Reading.*) "I, who for the first time have leisure at my disposal." "To free you from a position which must undoubtedly be an embarrassment and annoyance to you. Will wait upon you this afternoon." Oh! but he shall not find his portrait here (*crossing l. c.*) to mock at the foolish child who wove such fantastic romances in her solitude (*lifting portrait from stand*). I—but no! I cannot throw it away (*looking at picture*). Yes! he has a very noble face, proud and brave; and I who have tried to be so generous, and so gentle, because he was so magnanimous and heroic; I do not even exist for him—but,—but I cannot put his portrait away like that (*puts portrait in her pocket*).

(*Enter Yves d. r. f., announcing General Meunier*)

(*Enter Meunier and exit Yves.*)

(*Meunier wears the same uniform as that of Bonaparte, in the picture by Appiani.*)

SCENE XIV.

MEUNIER AND LOUISE.

MEUNIER, *after a pause.*—To whom have I the honor of speaking, madame?

LOUISE, *aside*.—My God! he does not even know me. (*Aloud.*) I—I am Madame de Frontenaec's granddaughter.

MEUNIER, *aside*.—That beautiful woman! (*Aloud.*) Madame, have you received the letter I ventured to send you. (*Aside.*) And can this be that timid child, this graceful and self-possessed young creature.

LOUISE.—I received the letter, monsieur, and am ready to ratify any steps you may see fit to take. (*Aside.*) Ah! he is not changed at all, but how cold and stern he is.

MEUNIER.—I trust you will pardon my long delay, which believe me, madame, was unavoidable. (*Aside.*) How strangely she looks at me.

LOUISE.—I do not doubt it, monsieur. (*Aside.*) Oh! if he knew all my foolish dreams I would die of shame.

MEUNIER.—If it had not been for orders I received, sending me to the Army of Italy, just three weeks after— after the ceremony, I should long since have begun the necessary proceedings.

LOUISE.—I do not question your impatience at the delay, monsieur.

MEUNIER.—I pledged my honor to Madame de Frontenaec, to place no obstacles to the dissolution of a marriage, whose only purpose was to protect you from terrible, and immanent danger.

LOUISE, *aside*.—Only purpose. (*Aloud.*) Believe me, monsieur, I am ready to aid you in any arrangements you may consider necessary.

MEUNIER, *aside*.—How difficult it is to say, now I am here. How strangely graceful, she is. (*Aloud.*) The formalities are very simple ; mutual consent is all that is required.

LOUISE, *quickly*.—And that shall not be wanting in our case, monsieur.

MEUNIER, *aside*.—How haughty she is, but how pretty, (*Aloud.*) In our case the family council would be dispensed with ; both because it in a case already judged, and then I have no living relatives, and you, madame, I believe have none in France.

LOUISE.—You are right, the case is already judged ; but you are mistaken, monsieur, I have one relative in France, my cousin, Monsieur de Frontenaec, has been in the château for the last three months.

MEUNIER, *aside*.—In the château ! what can that supple scoundrel be doing here. (*Aloud.*) But Monsieur de Frontenaec alone does not constitute a family council ; and in any case I do not think you would wish to have even the appearance of consulting him.

LOUISE.—And, why not, monsieur ? He is my cousin ; he was even betrothed to me when we were children.

MEUNIER.—Ah ! (*Aside.*) How proudly she defends him.

LOUISE.—And, now monsieur, may I ask what you propose to do ?

MEUNIER.—Oh ! the formalities are simple enough to satisfy even your impatience madame. A document containing a mutual consent to the dissolution of the marriage, certified by the proper authorities, and then sent to a magistrate, a month later, for confirmation, is sufficient to constitute a valid divorce.

LOUISE. — A month later !

MEUNIER — And does that seem so short a time to you, madame ?

LOUISE. — I but conform to your wishes, monsieur; but when the document is drawn up, am I expected to sign it ?

MEUNIER. — Such is the custom, madame, but even your impatience must brook delays. It is uncertain how long a time such proceedings might take. (*Aside.*) How impatient she is to be free. Ah ! if that scoundrel—

LOUISE. — And when it is drawn up, shall I send for it, or could Monsieur de Frontenaec—

MEUNIER. — Monsieur de Frontenaec, let him dare. — I ! I beg your pardon, madame, but— but Monsieur de Frontenaec, and I are of different political parties.

LOUISE, *aside*. — He hates even my cousin. (*Aloud.*) I excuse your vehemence, monsieur, it is natural in a time of excited politics.

MEUNIER. — And I madame, I think I have now told you all that is necessary, and so if you would permit me to retire. (*Aside.*) My God ! how she tortures me the exquisite, cold creature. Oh ! that Frontenaec !

(*Exit Meunier, d. r. f.*)

LOUISE. — How impatient he was to be gone, and how cold and hard he is. All my dreams are dead, he has killed them with a cruel hand. Ah ! but he shall never know what I have suffered ; I shall be prouder than he.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Glade in the Park of Frontenaec. Large trees, bouquet of trees in the centre, with stone bench.

Enter BEAUTEMPS, *left near the background*.—I wonder if that idiot Tâbellion can be up to any mischief. A nice public accuser he is; a little whipper snapper of a Muscadin, like that. But what in the devil can he mean, by spending his whole time, lounging around with that honey tongued conspirator Frontenaec; and then running every morning to Raspail's inn, where the diligence changes horses? I asked Raspail what packages he took for the citizen Tâbellion, and this is what he tells me. Nothing, nothing at all citizen Beautemps, excepting a letter every morning directed to— Here I have it, written down, (*Takes paper from pocket.*) that I might not forget it. (*Reading.*) Monsieur Sylvain Perruquier, barber, 140 rue St. Honoré, Paris. What can he mean by writing to a barber every day in the week. I know he takes precious care of his long hair, but how a barber five hundred kilometers away can dress it is more than I can see. And Sylvain Perruquier too, that is too suspiciously appropriate a name for a barber. A real barber would be much more likely to be called Cassé Brissac, or Montmerency. Ah! but there they come, arm in arm as usual, the public accuser of the Republic, and a returned emigrant, what a spectacle! Ah! but Gracchus Beautemps will keep his eye on them.

(*Enter Tabellion and Frontenaec.*)

SCENE II.

BEAUTEMPS, TABELLION and FRONTENAEC.

(*Frontenaec and Tabellion advance towards foreground.
Beautemps seated on stone bench in center.*)

TABELLION.—You can not doubt my zeal in your service, Monsieur de Frontenaec; if it were not for your charming cousin, and her friend, Madame Moreau.

FRONTENAEC, *perceiving Beautemps*.—Hush! Good day, Monsieur Beautemps, you can not doubt my delight at meeting you in the Park of Frontenaec.

BEAUTEMPS.—I do not doubt your ever recurring delight whenever you see me, but why should I not be in the Park of Frontenaec; it belongs to your cousin, the wife of my friend, General Meunier, as you, a returned emigrant, have forfeited all right to property in France.

FRONTENAEC, *aside*.—Can he suspect anything, the old dragon. (*Aloud.*) My cousin is most honored that you should find her park an agreeable resort.

TABELLION, *aside to Frontenaec*.—Oh! he is a terrible man, but let me propitiate him. (*Aloud.*) Oh! Monsieur Beautemps, I have some important news I will tell you, who have such a zeal for the public good.

BEAUTEMPS, *dryly*.—Some new discovery, some more conspirators, citizen Tâbellion?

TABELLION.—Yes, and this time a most important discovery, Monsieur Beautemps. Last week, as I was down at the inn, where they change horses for the diligence, waiting to send an important letter to Paris.

(*Side glance of Frontenaec at Tabellion with warning gesture. Beautemps watches both closely.*) Yes, a letter I send every day to my barber in Paris.

BEAUTEMPS.—Ah!

TABELLION.—Yes, well while I was waiting, the Nantes coach came in, and I made a strange, and important discovery. There is concealed under it some dark and sinister mystery, I am sure of it.

BEAUTEMPS, *aside*.—More scarecrows.

FRONTENAEC.—Continue, Monsieur Tâbellion, I am sure it will deeply interest Monsieur Beautemps.

BEAUTEMPS, *aside*.—Wants to throw me off the track. But, Sylvain Perruquier, I'll get to the bottom of that.

TABELLION.—Well, just as the coach stopped I saw that fellow Raspail go up to the driver, and hold some dark, mysterious converse in deep whispers. The driver then drew out a flat box from under the seat, trying to conceal it from my vigilance; for they are all afraid of my vigilance down here, Monsieur Beautemps. But I was too shrewd for them, and just as that fat fellow Raspail, who is slow of movement, was hastening into the house, I ran against him, and saw the address on the box. It was directed to Marianne Kerouec, Square of the Republic, Savenay. Then it emitted such a queer smell, just like gunpowder.

BEAUTEMPS.—Marianne Kerouec: that's the cook of the old citoyenne Durand, the mother-in-law of the President of the Tribunal, Forestier. Young man, if you want to be promoted, be careful how you interfere with your superior's mother-in-law's cook. You had better drop this affair; that's all the advice I have to

give you. (*Aside.*) This chattering poppinjay thinks he can turn me off the track. (*Taking out note book, and beginning to write, without paying any more apparent attention to Tabellion and Frontenaec.*)

TABELLION.--Ah! we will leave you Monsieur Beauteemps. You are in a cross humor to-day, nothing propitiates you; not even my zeal for the Republic.

FRONTENAEC, *to Tabellion, crossing towards the left.*—And can you, a man of your taste, and refinement, devote your whole life to a government of which the sanguinary Robespierre was the personification.

(*Enter Meunier and Moreau, left, nearer the background. Both pause and listen to the last words of Frontenaec.*)

SCENE III.

MEUNIER, MOREAU, FRONTENAEC, BEAUTEMPS.

TABELLION.

MEUNIER, *advancing.*—Robespierre never personified the Republic, monsieur Frontenaec, those only can personify a cause, who serve it unselfishly. The great and magnanimous Danton personified the republic; the egotistical Robespierre never. But what cause have you to complain of a government, which gives you even impunity to abuse it?

FRONTENAEC.--Ah! monsieur Meunier, I have never had the pleasure of meeting you before. It is strange that we who are so nearly, if so temporally, related, should not have met before.

MEUNIER.—Not at all strange, Monsieur Frontenaec. During these three years I have been defending my country, while you have been residing among its enemies. But if I have not before met you, I have at least had occasion to read many of your letters, I have even kept one as a souvenir of—esteem.

MOREAU, *catching Meunier's arm*.—Hush ! hush ! Look at Beautemps.

BEAUTEMPS, *who had apparently been absorbed in his book, raises his head quickly and looks at group on the left*.—Kept one of them ! Ah !

FRONTENAEC, *recovering himself*.—I can not but be honored by the esteem of so distinguished a man ; but considering the closeness of our relationship, and also considering I am my cousins's only relative in France ; I might be compelled to represent her in discussing the delicate matter which has brought you here. Considering all these things ; though, this park will be forever endeared to me as the place of our first conversation, yet perhaps, a less open locality might be more suitable to its continuance. So, au revoir, messieurs. Come, Monsieur Tâbellion.

(*Tabellion and Frontenaec cross towards the right. Beautemps rises as they pass, and advances behind them, watching them closely.*)

TABELLION, *to Frontenaec*.—Here is the envelope, Monsieur de Frontenaec. (*Extends envelope. Frontenaec takes letter from his pocket, and in endeavoring to slip it in hastily, lets envelope fall. Beautemps seizes it.*)

BEAUTEMPS, *aside*.—Sylvain Perruquier, 140 rue St-Honoré ; I knew it.

FRONTENAEC.—Many thanks, Monsieur Beautemps ; it is a communication for Monsieur Tâbellion's barber, the best in Paris; which he undertakes to send for me.

BEAUTEMPS.—And you too, get shaved by letter. Take care you do not risk getting something beside your hair cut off, citizen Frontenaec.

FRONTENAEC.—I am sincerely grateful for the interest you show in me Monsieur Beautemps. (*Aside.*) Cursed boor. (*Aloud.*) Come Tâbellion.

(*Exeunt Frontenaec and Tabellion.*)

SCENE IV.

MEUNIER, MOREAU, BEAUTEMPS.

BEAUTEMPS.—The traitor ; this time I have him. But what did Meunier mean ? Kept a letter. There is some mystery there.

(*Exit Beautemps.*)

SCENE V.

MEUNIER AND MOREAU.

MEUNIER.—He her representative ! he ! I—

MOREAU.—Control yourself, comrade. You do not want more scandal. They are already gossiping enough, all the country round. You are three years away, and when you come home in place of going to your wife's house, you take up your residence in the village. This might be rational—might have an explanation—if it were in order to obtain a divorce; but no proceedings have been begun.

MEUNIER. — Ah! I cannot, I cannot cut the last thread on which hangs a hope. When I came here ten days ago, it was but to fulfill a sacred duty—a promise given to the dead. I came down here, enervated by sickness, with a strange tendency to revery. Those weeks I lay in the hospital at Milan were the first pause in my life; the first opportunity I have had to stop to think. Ah! they lie who say a man is old at thirty-five. Youth will have its revenge, sooner or later. It seems to me I was never young before, and when I saw that witching creature, who treated me with such a haughty grace, all the suppressed fire of my youth awoke in my veins, all the unsatisfied dreams of my boyhood came to life again, and now I, who never loved before, I adore that ideal, unapproachable creature.

MOREAU.—But why unapproachable, comrade? Why do you do nothing to win her? Why do you leave that soft-voiced scoundrel Frontenaec, up at the château, to usurp your place?

MEUNIER.—Usurp my place! Do not say that Moreau! do not dare to say that!

MOREAU.—I pity you, comrade; passion is a terrible thing in a heart as energetic and vehement as yours, where all the sentiments have been wrought to a frantic acuteness by a life of austerity and effort. But believe me, I did not mean aught against the lady, who, from all my wife says, is everything that is good and gentle; but I fear you have mortally wounded her, and those doves are sometimes inexorably proud. But tell me, why did you not wait till you had seen her first, before thinking of a divorce, much less writing that formal letter.

MEUNIER. —And how did I know I should love her, I who but remembered her as a delicate, timid child, clinging to my hand, and imploring my pity, with her sweet voice. Fool that I was, from that hour, that sweet voice—those eyes enslaved me. I did not know it then. I know it now. That strange tenderness that drew me to her, and made me ready to die to save her an instant's pain or peril, was more than pity. And I who adore her—I have wounded her with my brutal folly ; and she will never forgive me, even if she could ever have looked upon me in any other light than as an intruding stranger.

MOREAU. —If what my Amélie tells me be true, she had much gentler thoughts of you ; but tell me again, what did you say to her ?

MEUNIER. —Ah ! how do I know. Some foolish talk, proceedings, arrangements, documents, and, God pardon me, divorce ; and all the time I was looking at her, and under the charm of her witching grace, losing more and more surely every minute, the train of my thoughts—the control of my reason.

MOREAU. —Ah ! Meunier, how could you, who are so talented have been so foolish ; even if she had been one who could only have inspired a friendly respect, to go to a beautiful, accomplished and admired young woman, and tell her that you have no more pressing anxiety on earth than to break the bonds that bind you to her. Ah ! can you not see the offense was mortal ; the more so, as I think she may have nourished for you some gentler sentiment, such as young girls weave in their gossamer dreams.

MEUNIER. —Ah ! do not say that ; it would be too cruel. Ah ! how foolish is a man in love—more glorious than

an emperor in his dreams, more foolish than a silly child in his actions. There, when I wander all night around the château, only to be near her, only to catch a glimpse of light from her windows—my dreams soar to the grandest heights—a very paradise of passion, and poetry opens before me. Then I ask myself why I should not enter that charmed dwelling, throw myself at her feet, tell her how I idolize her, supplicate her to forgive my harsh words. Then I think she may look at me with a displeased and haughty air, and bid me be-gone in her cold, sweet voice. Ah! then my wings are withered, and the springs of my will broken, and I could cry like a child for very helplessness.

MOREAU.—Do not despair, comrade ; there is always hope for a man like you. But first send that accursed Frontenaec away ; it is not seemly that he should be there in your wife's house. You hold him in your power absolutely. If they but knew of that letter in Paris, his head would fall on the guillotine to-morrow, but—Hush ! here comes Beautemps.

(*Enter Beautemps, left.*)

SCENE V.

BEAUTEMPS, MEUNIER, MOREAU.

BEAUTEMPS.—The traitor escaped me this time, but I count on you, Meunier, to help me trap him.

MOREAU.—What is the matter ?

MEUNIER.—Beautemps, what excites you so ?

BEAUTEMPS.—I have been for a long time suspecting that simpleton Tâbellion of being a tool in the hands of that conspiring villain, Frontenaec.

MOREAU.—And have you discovered any new proof of his treason, anything that would compel him again to leave the country?

BEAUTEMPS.—If there be still justice in France, it will compel him to leave for that land from which no traveler returns. I am sure of it, if the matter be but sifted to the bottom. Why, I saw him just now with my own eyes, slip a sealed letter into an envelope in Tâbellion's hands, directed in Tâbellion's writing.

MOREAU.—A queer proceeding, certainly, but did you by chance see the address on the envelope.

BEAUTEMPS.—In their guilty haste they let it fall; you may believe I seized it. The address on it was Sylvain Perruquier, barber, 140 rue St. Honoré.

MOREAU, *laughing*.—A very simple kind of conspiracy I should think, with two men with such long hair. They send to Paris to get a new supply of it from time to time. But, hold! the weapon maker where I get my swords, is 138 rue St. Honoré, and the store on one side of his shop is a carpenter's, that on the other, a grocery. To be sure, there's a fellow called Perruquier lives over the carpenter's shop, but I never heard he was a barber, or in any case, not such a one as a muscadin like Frontenaec would care to deal with.

BEAUTEMPS.—I knew it, and he said the best barber in Paris. Oh! the case is plain, there is some dark, diabolical mystery under all this. But the question is to prove it; for the government we have now requires all kinds of proofs before condemning a man to death. And it is you, and Meunier whom I expect to aid me.

MOREAU.—Faith, I am entirely at your service. I despise the fellow as much as you do, Beautemps, and

would be just as glad to see him out of the country. So only tell me what I can do to compass that end, and I am at your service, and that with a good will too.

BEAUTEMPS.—I have always thought there was something strange about that affair three years ago; though I feel differently about some things now. I have since learned that the old marquise was very kind to the country people, and worked no active mischief, and the little girl was pretty enough to tempt a young man like Meunier; so if he concealed anything then, to serve them, I can hardly blame him. But times are changed now, the old woman is dead, and the granddaughter is his wife, what further reason can there be to hide it now.

MOREAU.—And what makes you think there was anything concealed from you?

BEAUTEMPS.—I did not believe then, I do not believe now that Gilbert Meunier would have married a woman guilty of treason, but I repeat it there would be no danger now to him, or his wife, if the head of Hector Honoré Frontenaec fell on the scaffold to-morrow.

MEUNIER, *who has been seated, rising, and crossing towards Beautemps and Moreau.*—But there would be danger to my self respect, if I could strike that mean, and underhand blow, and then,—then there would be danger of grief to she who is his cousin.

BEAUTEMPS.—And your wife!

MEUNIER.—A reason more why he should be protected.

BEAUTEMPS.—Protected! Do you know what they say in the country?

MEUNIER.—And what do they say? What do they dare to say?

MOREAU.—Silence Beautemps! Not a word more.

BEAUTEMPS.—Yes, I will speak, it is time the truth should be known. They say that Frontenaec loves your wife, and—

MEUNIER.—And— what other infamy, continue, monsieur.

BEAUTEMPS.—And that she is not indifferent to him; now will you give up that letter, you taunted Frontenaec with.

MEUNIER, *fiercely*.—Never! never! do you hear me! Not while Gilbert Meunier lives to defend it. As long as there remain straight roads to vengeance, I shall never take crooked ones. But your lie, your infamous lie about her, I do not believe it, she is purer, holier than the angels; and he who dares to breathe but a whisper against her shall count with me.

BEAUTEMPS.—I have no desire to quarrel with you Meunier; it is but in your interest that I speak. As you do not seem in a humour to listen to reason to-day I shall leave you till another time.

(*Exit Beautemps.*)

SCENE VI.

MEUNIER and MOREAU.

MEUNIER.—Oh! that Frontenaec. I will kill him, I will kill him Moreau. Even Beautemps dared to say he loved her; dared to look his passion so plainly, that all the world could see it. Oh! that Frontenaec; my God! how I hate him.

MOREAU.—And yet you held his life in your power, and let him escape—nay even defended him.

MEUNIER.—It is my habit to strike my foes in the breast, not to stab them in the back.

(Curtain.)

ACT IV.

(*Same as Act II.*)

SCENE I.

SOPHIE, *bustling about, arranging articles.*—Oh! but this is a strange world. There's the little madame was crazy about her general, while he was away; and now he has come back, they do not even speak. Leastwise he goes down, and lodges in the village at that cross Monsieur Beautemp's, and never comes up here but once, and that for a mighty short visit. Ah! I don't know what can be the matter, unless it is that married couples are only really fond of one another when they are separated by three or four hundred kilometers. And the little madame, so changed too, so cold and haughty, not gentle and talkative as she used to be. Ah! if that's the way all the marriages turn out, my faith, I'd better remain single myself, and avoid that great skulking fellow of a Bienvenu, when he comes dandling around, at all hours, and all times. How queer it was I should meet him the other day when I was down in the village, and after all these years too; and he says he is General Meunier's orderly now. How queer things do turn out. (*Noise of heavy steps outside.*) Ah! there is some one coming, I wonder who it can be.

(*Enter Bienvenu, uniform of the period.*)

SCENE II.

SOPHIE AND BIENVENU.

SOPHIE.—Is that you, Bonaventure? Well! if you haven't brass, to present yourself in this way in madame's boudoir, without so much as asking permission.

BIENVENU.—Oh! but I have a good excuse; here's a note from my general.

SOPHIE.—It is well, at least, that he writes her a note. A nice kind of husband he is, your general, anyway!

BIENVENU.—Don't you say a word against him, Mademoiselle Sophie Thibaudin. He's as good as gold; besides it shows a want of common sense on your part. Don't everybody know that when there's trouble between married people, it's always the wife who is cantankerous?

SOPHIE.—Much obliged to you, Monsieur Bonaventure Bienvenu. It is to be hoped you know more about matrimony than you do about military affairs. Here you are only a sergeant, when everybody else is coming home a general.

BIENVENU.—Not everybody, Mademoiselle Sophie; save your respect; there are still some soldiers left.

SOPHIE.—And you were sure to be one of them.

BIENVENU.—And haven't you a nobleman from down here who won't be anything but a grenadier. I didn't want to put on more airs than he.

SOPHIE.—Ah! I know why they didn't make you an officer; it is because you can't read nor write.

BIENVENU.—And what good would reading or writing be to a fighting man ; fencing and firing would be a deal more sensible and civilized. But you are very much mistaken in thinking I did not distinguish myself, too.

SOPHIE.—And pray where was it ?

BIENVENU.—It was at the battle of Castiglione ; and they wanted to promote me and make me an officer, but didn't for the little reason you mentioned. But the general-in-chief heard of my exploits, and sent for me himself. And there he was, the great General Bonaparte, with all his glittering staff standing round ; and he sitting under a big tree on a pile of saddles, before an old wine cask, taking his dinner off an Italian muss of macaroni and cheese, and another Italian muss of rice. And so he says to me, just like that, “ Bienvenu my brave fellow, what can I do for you ? ” and I, who had not tasted a bite for twenty-four hours, and at the sight and smell of the victuals felt my stomach going down to my heels, I said right up and down, “ If it's all the same to you, citizen general, you'ud give me some of your dinner, and if you'ud let me sit right down at the cask without waiting, I could say I had had the honor of dining with the greatest man in Europe.” The general laughed, and then he says, with that grand air of his, “ Very well, citizen sergeant, squat down and fall to on the grub.” And so I sat down on the end of a canteen, though it was rather a small seat for a man of my proportions. But didn't I devour the victuals, and the general all the time saying “ Take this, take that,” and all the aides de camp standing around staring, and that jolly General Lannes holding his sides for laughter.

SOPHIE.—You don't suppose I believe a word of your gasconading trooper's stories.

BIENVENU.—But it's true; just as true as that you have the most beautiful eyes in the world, and that I adore you. (*Tries to kiss Sophie, who slaps him soundly on the face.*)

SOPHIE.—You don't suppose an honest girl is going to let herself be kissed by a wandering vagabond like you, who never stays long enough in any one place to take her before the mayor, much less to a church!

(*Exit Sophie.*)

BIENVENU.—There! she is gone, and I don't know but there's some truth in what she says, and—but it might be better to settle down in some nice comfortable nest with a pretty wife like that, than to be knocking around the world all one's life, pummeling and getting pummeled (*rubbing his cheek*). Ugh! but I am sure she'd make a good wife, she strikes such a straight blow. But there, I'll go after her, for I hear some one coming.

(*Exit Bienvenu.*)

SCENE III.

(*Enter Louise by window l. f., crosses to r. c., removes her hat and throws it on table.*)

LOUISE.—Not one word from him in ten days. He does not even treat me with the respect due to a woman. Oh! what a child I was; in what a dream world I have lived; and yet I was so happy, so happy. I would never have wished for anything more—anything more real or tangible affrighted me. I have never done anything

wicked that I should be so cruelly punished. Why did he ever come here and act so hardly, so distantly, so contemptuously to me. (*Weeping.*) I, who always thought of him as he looked that day so long ago, so kind and gentle, and yet so proud and so brave. Ah! what have I ever done to him, that he should hate me; speak with such contempt even of Hector, because he is my cousin. Ah! he did not tell the truth when he said they hated each other, because they were of different political parties. (*Looking over books on table.*) Ah! there is nothing there I would care to read. I do not read anything now, only wander aimlessly about. It seems to me I am losing all the poor intelligence I once had. (*Looking at salver on end of table.*) But there are the letters. Only one this morning. Let me see who remembers me. Ah! (*looking at address.*) Madame Meunier. What a strange mockery it seems now, Ah! but it is his handwriting. The documents, I suppose. He sends them to me, he could not even bring them. (*Opens letter feverishly and reads.*)

Madame,

Trusting to your gracious kindness to receive me I will presume to present myself at the château this afternoon.

GILBERT MEUNIER.

He will bring them then, himself. (*Reading.*) Gracious kindness. Ah! he is happy in the prospect of his release; and then he will go away to Paris, away to the war again, and get wounded, perhaps get killed! Oh! my God! what a sad, and meaningless thing life is. And I was so happy only last week. If I could only die; it is the thought of living long, long dull years that is so horrible. Oh! that terrible scar on his forehead. If

he were to be killed, and this was to be our last meeting. How cruelly practical, and hard he was ; how he ignored all my fantastic girlish fancies ; and if he saw me now, how he would mock at me, perhaps despise me. That he shall never do. What if I should have betrayed my pain, my disappointment to him. How the thought stings. But he shall not know it, no one shall ever know it.

Enter YVES, announcing.—Madame Moreau.

(Enter Amélie, exit Yves.)

SCENE IV.

AMÉLIE and LOUISE.

AMÉLIE, *kissing Louise.*—Why are you so cold to me, my dear. I am sure we have no cause to quarrel. Oh! these husbands, these husbands. There's that Meunier, who after three years' absence comes down here, and you have some kind of a quarrel, and he goes wandering around, looking like a black thunder cloud. Now if you will take my advice, my dear, you will punish him ; for he has been in the wrong, I am sure he has ; the men always are ; but then afterwards you will forgive him, for he looks so very unhappy.

LOUISE.—You are wrong Amélie to think I would have any influence on General Meunier's happiness or unhappiness. He has come down here to dissolve the marriage, which you know,— which we all know was a mere formality. He says it is only necessary to sign a document saying we both consent to it, both wish it, and send it to a magistrate,— and that makes a valid divorce.

AMÉLIE.—He said that, did he? The heartless monster, the good for nothing, unfeeling brute. Excuse me Louise, but when my feelings overcome me, I can't help expressing them plainly. And that foolish Moreau is so devoted to him; intelligent as he is, I don't see how he can be so deceived.

LOUISE.—General Meunier has a perfect right to adopt the proceeding which seems to him the best, and I am sure we have never expected, never wished for anything else.

AMÉLIE.—We,—hem! (*Aside.*) But there is some mystery here, something inexplicable. (*Aloud.*) But when are these pretty proceedings to be consummated.

LOUISE.—I received a note this morning from General Meunier, telling me he would come to the château this afternoon; presumably to bring the papers.

AMÉLIE—Will you let me see the note?

LOUISE.—Willingly. (*Handing note.*)

AMÉLIE, *reading*.—Madame!—a pretty way to address one's wife in a letter; gracious kindness, hem!—Signed Gilbert Meunier. Well it must be confessed General Meunier writes with a military brevity. (*Aside.*) I don't understand it at all.

LOUISE.—And are more phrases required in so simple, and so formal a matter.

AMÉLIE, *aside*.—She is nervous, and concealing some miserable secret under her cold air. (*Aloud.*) But let us leave these serious things. Have you heard the latest news, Monsieur Tâbellion has made a new discovery. You poor child, you look as if you needed something to cheer you up. So you shall hear it.

LOUISE.—I am sure I shall enjoy it, if it is funny.

AMÉLIE, *aside*.—The poor child, what a fib. (*Aloud*.) You know how vigilant that poor Monsieur Tâbellion is, how anxious for the public safety, how continually on the hunt he is for some dark, and dangerous conspiracy. Well! he was hanging around Raspail's inn about a week ago, on the search for something important, and he thought he had found it, when the Nantes coach came in; and he saw the driver hand that fat Raspail, some kind of a box, which he says emitted a most singular odor, and no wonder; wait till you hear the rest of the story.

LOUISE.—Go on, it is very amusing. (*Aside*.) I hope she does not think I am sad, or nervous.

AMÉLIE.—The enterprising Tâbellion; would you have even thought he had so much boldness, ran against Raspail, and saw the address on the box. So he went, and warned the authorities of his great discovery, and they called the jury necessary under the present law to decide on the validity of an accusation. Are you listening dear?

LOUISE.—Yes, I am listening most attentively.

AMÉLIE.—Well, when the jury was all assembled, they laid before them a second box, which the vigilant Tâbellion had mean time seized. It was directed to old Marianne Kerouec, the cook of Madame Durand, the President of the Tribunal's mother-in-law. Well! when the box was opened, after all due precaution against possible danger from the gunpowder Tâbellion has smelt, they found what do you think,— a half-dozen large cakes of fresh cheese.

LOUISE.—Cheese!

AMÉLIE.—Yes, cheese, and a sealed letter on top for old Madame Durand. This dangerous document was opened, as it might give a clue to the mystery. It was from madame Forestier telling her mother that she took this round-about way of sending delicacies in order to avoid the octroi duties, and hoping that her mother would be as much pleased with the cheese, as she had been with the partridges. That poor Tâbellion, I could die of laughter, cheese and partridges, and he so fond of sweet odors. And without counting that this fine exposé has irremediably embroiled him with his superior, and spoiled all his chances of promotion.

LOUISE.—Poor Monsieur Tâbellion.

AMÉLIE — There now, I hope I have amused you, though I will tell you a secret. I am but half gay myself, when I think of many things. Ah! do not be offended, my dear, I do not wish to hurt you. But there is some dark mystery in all this ; some danger threatening. Your cousin's name is never mentioned in General Meunier's presence, but his eyes flash, and he looks fierce,— so fierce. Ah! if I were Monsieur de Frontenaec I should be afraid.

LOUISE.—Monsieur de Frontenaec is able to defend himself, unless General Meunier should take advantage of his superior physical strength, a nobleman cannot be expected to be as strong as a peasant.

AMÉLIE.—Ah! there now you are cruel, Louise ; you know I came from the small bourgeoisie of Paris, where my parents kept a little shop before the revolution. But surely you will acknowledge that General Meunier is the superior of Monsieur de Frontenaec, in intellect, in energy, in present position, in everything.

LOUISE.—Forgive me Amélie, I did not mean to wound you ; but what is General Meunier, and his merits to me ?

AMÉLIE.—But what is the cause of his dislike for your cousin ?

LOUISE.—Because he is my cousin. Because he hates me, I suppose.

AMÉLIE.—Hates you, the fine idea ! Are you sure it is hatred or jealousy. And now, goodbye my dear ; let us hope this miserable affair will come out all right. For it is all wrong, my dear, all wrong.

(Exit Amélie.)

SCENE V.

LOUISE.

LOUISE.—If there should be truth in what she says, jealousy ! Ah ! if I could only think it.

Enter YVES, after looking around and seeing no one but Louise.—Monsieur le Marquis.

(Enter Frontenaec, exit Yves.)

SCENE VI.

FRONTENAEC, *coming down center, kisses Louise's hand.*
—Ah ! my beautiful cousin, every day you grow more adorable, and more adored.

LOUISE.—Cousin Hector, why will you always pay me such tedious compliments. One would think such affectations might be dropped between relatives.

FRONTENAEC.—Relatives, ah! you are cruel. And since when has it been forbidden a cousin to love his cousin, nay to adore her.

LOUISE.—How many times have I told you Hector, that I did not want you to speak to me in that way.

FRONTENAEC.—And can it be still the thought of that absurd marriage which binds you. General Meunier is not so scrupulous.

LOUISE.—Not a word against him, monsieur! (*Pauses confused.*) How!— how can you judge him, when you have not even met him?

FRONTENAEC.—Oh! yes and a very disagreeable meeting it was too; where he taunted me with possessing a letter of mine which he said put me in his power.

LOUISE.—Did he say that? Did he say that mean, and cowardly thing?

FRONTENAEC.—Ah! you see these peasants will never be able to comprehend the lofty delicacy of sentiment, which characterizes the nobility alone. Ah! my cousin, my adored cousin, dissolve this fatal marriage that you may replace it by an alliance better suited to your birth, and beauty, that will give you again the right to bear the noble name you have discarded, and make of me the happiest of men, the most—

Enter YVES, announcing.—General Meunier.

(Enter Meunier, exit Yves.)

SCENE VII.

MEUNEIR, LOUISE and FRONTENAEC.

Frontenaec still leaning over the back of sofa where Louise is seated.)

MEUNIER, *aside*.—He here; and in that lover's attitude. (*Aloud*.) Madame, having received no answer to my note, I presumed to consider your gracious permission accorded; but I will confess I counted on an interview without the presence of one who can not, and should not have any interest in our affairs.

FRONTENAEC, *to Louise*.—Shall I remain, my fair cousin?

LOUISE.—Remain, Hector, I desire it, and you monsieur, you may freely discuss any matter in the presence of my only near relative; the only one in France to whom I am in any degree related.

MEUNIER, *aside*.—The only one! (*Aloud*.) I thought, madame, there were some insults calculated to efface even the nearest relationship.

FRONTENAEC.—Monsieur. (*Advances threateningly from behind the sofa.*)

MEUNIER.—The man who could invite his nearest relatives, refined, and noble women, to assume a rôle, pah! I will not insult this lady by defining it.

FRONTENAEC.—Is only equaled by the man who to remove a supposed rival from his path, would basely betray family secrets which had fallen in his power, by the merest chance, or a sad necessity.

MEUNIER.—You judge me by yourself, Monsieur Frontenaec. It is not surprising that the man who has betrayed his country, should suspect others of betraying their pride and their honor.

FRONTENAEC.—It is not the custom in the society in which I was born to settle disputes in the presence of ladies.

MEUNIER.—And in the society in which I have lived, it is not the custom to shrink from responsibilities, or to protect one's timidity behind pretexts, even the most tempting.

FRONTENAEC.—I can not expect to make you understand, monsieur, shades of delicacy necessarily incomprehensible to you.

MEUNIER.—But there is a language all men understand Monsieur Frontenaec, and which perhaps even you may not refuse to comprehend, (*Striking Frontenaec across the face with his chamois gauntlet.*) and which may perhaps cure you of your ardor for peace and security.

FRONTENAEC.—You shall have satisfaction, and give it to me, also, monsieur.

LOUISE, *aside*.—Oh! my God!

MEUNIER.—Very well, monsieur; I shall be at your service at seven o'clock to-morrow morning in the glade at the end of the park.

FRONTENAEC.—At eleven o'clock, rather, monsieur; I am not accustomed to rise at such early hours.

MEUNIER.—If your honor can suffer the delay; I shall curb my impatience into submission.

FRONTENAEC.—Till the pleasure of our next meeting, monsieur (*salutes profoundly; Meunier responds slightly*).

(*Exit Frontenaec, d. r. f.*)

MEUNIER, *glancing towards Louise*.—Not a word! not a glance.

(*Exit Meunier, slowly.*)

SCENE VIII.

LOUISE.

LOUISE, *rises and crosses towards center, as if to follow them*.—Oh! Hector will kill him; and I—I am the miserable cause (*faints*).

(*Curtain.*)

ACT V.

(*Same as Act III.*)

SCENE I.

BEAUTEMPS, *entering l.*—And so that romantic madman, Meunier, still refuses to give me the letter. Never mind, I shall trap him without it. I shall write to the authorities in Paris to have that house in the Rue St. Honoré searched, and we shall see if my fine Muscadin will be allowed to parade his insolence around this country any longer, conspiring under the very nose of Gracchus Beauteemps. Not that I think he is of a caliber to work much mischief. And maybe I would not consider the clue worth pursuing if he were to leave the country. And that little fool, Tâbellion, too ; a nice public accuser he is, with his cheese and his partridges and his scarecrows, lending his official name to facilitate the very correspondence of the conspirators. But that miserable dandy of a Frontenaec, what business has he here, making love to a patriot's wife, too. He shall either leave, and that quickly, or I will see he is sent to a safe place.

(*Enter Moreau, left.*)

SCENE II.

MOREAU AND BEAUTE MPS.

MOREAU.—Have you seen anything strange about Meunier this morning?

BEAUTE MPS.—Nothing specially strange, excepting that everything he does is strange. What kind of a life is that he leads, staying up all night wandering around the country, and coming in in the morning with his clothes covered with dew, and a haggard face, looking as if he had seen ghosts. It is worse than winter campaigning; no man could stand it. But, hold! there is something strange. He always comes in towards five o'clock; I know it, for I am an early riser, and this morning he was not in when I left the house, and (*looking at his watch*) it is now half-past six.

MOREAU.—But he has been to see me, and behaved so strangely, and gave me this letter for Madame Meunier, saying she might not like to see him after what was about to occur. Can you give me any clue to the mystery?

BEAUTE MPS.—I don't know; some fuss with that cursed Frontenaec, I suppose.

MOREAU.—My faith! I believe you are right.

BEAUTE MPS.—By twelve o'clock, because she will hear the news before. Ah! I have it. A duel, such as they used to have in the olden times, when family questions were involved. A duel to the death, without witnesses, in which he will kill that scoundrel Frontenaec. Oh? I am devilish glad to hear it. I knew Meunier would show the proper spirit, for all his preaching, and he the best swordsman in the army. Oh! that Frontenaec is a

dead man (*rubbing his hands with glee*). Why, I have not been so happy in years. I feel as if I were already attending his funeral.

MOREAU.—But what will become of my poor friend's happiness. How will the woman he adores receive him when he goes to her with hands stained with the blood of her cousin?

BEAUTEMPS.—Pooh! pooh! A woman never likes a man the less for a little bloodshed. A lover is a thousand times endeared to her when he has slaughtered two or three fellows on account of her.

MOREAU.—Poor Meunier!

BEAUTEMPS.—Ha! ha! fight a duel with Meunier, indeed! that dandy. Oh! he is a dead man. This is the best news I have had in years. I will go and see what I can learn about it.

(*Exit Beautemps, l.*)

SCENE III.

MOREAU.—Ah! there is no aid to be expected from that madman; and to think he is a good man in private life, too. Ah! there are some men on whom politics act like the virus of a mad dog. My poor comrade, his wild, jealous heart has wrecked all his hopes. And that poor little Louise, too; too proud to intervene, quit to break her heart about it afterwards. He said twelve o'clock; in that case the duel must take place some time before. There may be time to do something yet. Let me think.

(*Enter Amélie, left.*)

SCENE IV.

MOREAU AND AMÉLIE.

AMÉLIE.—Ah! Lucien, what a man you are; to run away from me like that, and just when I had made a discovery, too.

MOREAU.—And what is it—your famous discovery. It must be something wonderful, to have brought you out so early.

AMÉLIE.—And so it is, monsieur. Ah! be on your guard; there is no punishment too severe for a man who tries to keep a secret from his wife. And then it is such a silly waste of ingenuity, for she is sure to find it out.

MOREAU.—And what is it—that famous secret I have been keeping from you, my little Amélie.

AMÉLIE.—And do you suppose, stupid man that you are, that I have not seen this long time, that you and Meunier have some dark, mysterious secret.

MOREAU.—Ah! poor Meunier; his secret is simple enough. He adores his wife, and he has mortally offended her.

AMÉLIE.—Ah! I have more than half suspected it. The poor fellow. And such a pretty love story, so romantic and improbable, to be spoilt like that. All for nothing, for a mere whim, a caprice, the misunderstanding of two big children. But I shall put it all right. I shall go to see Louise. Yes, this very minute, even if I have to wake her up to do it.

MOREAU.—But stop, my kind-hearted little wife; there is something far more serious. Meunier and Fronte-

naec are to fight this morning, some time before twelve o'clock.

AMÉLIE.—Oh! the great, blundering fellow, to wreck things like that. Oh! was there ever anything as awkward as a man, It takes all the wits we poor women have to set your blunders right.

MOREAU.—Ah! my good, little Amélie, if your wits could only help us now. But I can see no escape. Meunier will not retreat; in the wild passion of his energetic and combative nature, he will find a fierce joy in killing his rival, even if it wrecks his own life; and as to Frontenaec, I cannot see any hope there, either.

AMÉLIE.—But have you no hold upon him, that Frontenaec; no means of frightening him into submission; of making him leave the country before the duel takes place. And yet Monsieur Beautemps talks all the time about his conspiracies and the letters he sends to Paris

MOREAU.—Letters. Ah! that letter Meunier has would frighten him a thousand times more than any Beautemps will ever lay hands on.

AMÉLIE.—Letter! what letter? Oh! you wretched man, you keep all your secrets from me.

MOREAU.—Not my own; that was my friend's. It is a letter which Meunier found at the château three years ago at the time of the wedding, and that he kept, thinking it contained information on which the national salvation might depend. A letter from Hector de Frontenaec to his grandmother, inviting her to join him in treasonable projects, and telling her of his intended landing with the enemy's army on the coast of Brittany.

AMÉLIE.—And could anything better be wanted? Go! go quickly, find him, and tell him you have the letter. Don't mind fibs; no fibs would cause me one qualm of conscience in so good a cause. Besides, no kind-hearted woman minds fibs, anyway. Go tell him you have it and will give him up to the authorities this very morning, unless he leaves the country instantly and avoids every quarrel with Meunier.

MOREAU.—And what good would it do, my poor Amélie. These aristocrats have many faults, but cowardice is not one of them. They are all brave, or like to be thought so; and pride itself would forbid him to retreat under such a threat.

AMÉLIE.—But, come! come! There's no time to lose, I think I can frighten braver men than he. Besides a soldier's wife should not be afraid to attack a position in front. Come! come!

(Exeunt Amélie and Moreau r. 1st g.)

SCENE V.

(Enter Louise, r. 3rd g.)

LOUISE.—And I have tried so to hasten, and yet had to stop every minute to keep from fainting. Oh! how I prayed, only to have strength to come. I will see him, I will tell him everything. I will tell him how I have loved him, how I have dreamt of him all these years. I will implore him, I will supplicate him not to risk his life. Oh! surely, he will be too magnanimous to break my heart. Oh I will not think of pride, or humiliation; he may even despise me if he likes. But there is some one coming. Oh! it is he, it is he, and now I dare not

speak; I dare not say anything. All my courage has left me. Oh! what it is to be such a coward, and yet to suffer so. What it is to be a woman, and helpless. (*sinks on stone bench in center.*)

SCENE VI.

LOUISE and MEUNIER.

(*Enter Meunier, 3rd g. l., at first not perceiving her comes down at l.*)

MEUNIER.—And she defended him, took his part against me; spoke of him as the only being who was anything to her. And for me she had not a word of compassion, not a glance of pity; though she must have seen the tempest of anguish which raged in my soul. Ah! I shall have one happiness, if one alone, before I die; it will be to pierce his traitor's heart. (*Perceiving Louise.*) Ah! madame, you here! your cousin's life must be very precious to bring you out in the forest so early this damp morning. But, believe me, he guards his person much more carefully than you do yours. Even the memory of an insult which a less polished, or a prouder man, would have deemed occasion for immediate resentment, will not deprive him of one minute of his accustomed rest.

LOUISE.—Oh! surely, surely, Monsieur, you will not fight this wicked, cruel duel. Oh! if you only knew what I have suffered.

MEUNIER.—And do you suppose the thought of the suffering you have endured for him, will whet my compassion. Have you not humiliated me enough with your merciless disdain, the haughty contempt with which you ignored me in his presence?

LOUISE, *aside*.—Oh! if Amélie should be right, if he should be jealous; to know that, and then to lose him. My God! have pity. (*Aloud*.) What can I say to move you monsieur; if you only knew all my thoughts, all my dreams.

MEUNIER.—Ah! you would tell me them. Spare me that. I do not need to know them. I know that as soon as the law shall release you from hated bonds; from a name which in your aristocratic pride, you deem a degradation; you will hasten to wash off the stain by more suitable, more becoming nuptials.

LOUISE, *aside*.—Oh! if he should be jealous. (*Aloud*.) And what marriage is that which would be deemed so honorable, and becoming?

MEUNIER.—And have you the heart to ask me that, ask me who adore you; every fibre whose being thrills with anguish at the thought of losing you? But that shall not be, I swear it. I cannot compel you to be mine; I cannot force you into a union which is hateful to you; but his you shall never be; I swear it. No man with blood in his veins, and a heart in his breast could be asked to endure that. All night long I have thought with a fierce delight of the hour which would place us face to face; not because he was a vile traitor to his country in her hour of need, not because he was the base insulter of a noble woman who had every right to his reverence; not even because he outraged your young beauty with words whose infamy you could not even comprehend. No! for all these things I despise him; but it is because you love him, that I hate him; and I will kill him, madame; do you hear me, I will kill him.

LOUISE.—No, you will not kill him, because I despise him; because I love you, Gilbert; because I have loved you for years, ever since that day so long ago, when you talked to me so gently, and defended me so proudly. In all these years, I have thought of nothing, dreamed of nothing but you.

MEUNIER.—Thought of me, dreamed of me, my fairy of paradise.

LOUISE.—And of what else should I think; of what else should I dream, but of he whose heroism had given wings to my soul. Poor wings how rudely they were broken, when you wrote me that cold, hard letter, and treated me so like a stranger. I, a stranger to you, Gilbert, I, whose spirit has been with you on every battlefield in every trial, and every suffering of these long, glorious years. Oh! how could you be so cruel to me, Gibert, how could you be so cruel?

MEUNIER.—I cruel to you! Oh! my angel. I could kiss the dust at your feet. Oh! what have I ever done, to what have I ever aspired, that I should be so happy.

(*Enter, r. Amélie, Moreau and Frontenaec.*)

SCENE VII.

AMÉLIE, *perceiving Meunier and Louise, who do not see her.*—Hush?

(*Enter Tabellion hastily left, followed by Beautemps.*)

TABELLION.—Ladies, ladies, I wanted to be the first to tell you the news. Peace has been signed at Campo Formio.

AMÉLIE, *pointing to Meunier and Louise.*—And ratified at Frontenaec.

MOREAU.—Now, Monsieur de Frontenaec, are you willing to leave?

FRONTENAEC.—I submit. (*Sarcastically.*) The future evidently belongs to the democracy.

BEAUTEMPS.—This time you speak the truth.

(*Curtain.*)







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